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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7332  
INFO RUEHZA/WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUMIAAA/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL//CINC/POLAD// PRIORITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J5 MIAMI FL PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 001830

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ECPS](#) [HO](#)

SUBJECT: HONDURAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS UNION PROTESTS DEMAND  
A REAL MANAGER

Classified By: Acting Deputy Chief of Mission, Andrea Brouillette-Rodriguez, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (U) On November 9, the head of the state run telecommunications company, Hondutel, was accused of abuse of authority for allegedly committing telephone espionage against President Manuel Zelaya, cabinet members, and members of Congress. After evading authorities for almost a week, Chimirri voluntarily turned himself in on November 14. He returned to his duties as manager of Hondutel that day, after a judge released him on preventive measures, which require him to check in with a judge every Tuesday. The first hearing is set for December 5. President Zelaya denied Chimirri's request to resign, instead granting him indefinite leave, which will start November 30. According to rumors, a new head of Hondutel will be selected by the board of directors in the coming days. Possible names circulating are Hector Rodriguez (Presidential Advisor and uncle of Chimirri), Raul Valladares (Mel Zelaya's private secretary), and Luis Lozano (a liberal party insider). The Honduran Telecommunications Workers Union is demanding that the board of directors select someone with a technical background in the field, instead of "another political appointee." The press reported that over 1,000 Hondutel employees gathered outside of the Presidential Palace on November 26 to make their demands heard.

2. (C) Comment: In October, before any of these events occurred, union leaders came to the Embassy to express their concerns with the way the state run company was being managed. The union complained it had negotiated in good faith to try and save the struggling company, and even taken a reduction in force of over 250 positions, only to have them filled a few months later by political party activists. The union members claimed that almost none of these people even bothered to show up for work, but only to collect their paychecks. Hondutel employees have quickly moved from quietly complaining in private meetings to proactively voicing their opposition in public, which may call attention to similar practices of political appointees heading other state run companies. End comment.  
BROUILLETTE-RODRIGUEZ